

## Confessional Conference for Reformed Unity Launched at Wheaton

*After two years of planning and preparation by a committee composed of men from both the Presbyterian and Reformed communities, the Confessional Conference for Reformed Unity was inaugurated at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois in late July.*

Although the attendance was low—75 delegates and observers—participants were enthusiastic and committed to the purpose of the conference: to prepare confessional statements in opposition to the prevailing errors of the day—the errors of evolutionism, egalitarianism and the confusion present in the churches over ecclesiology.

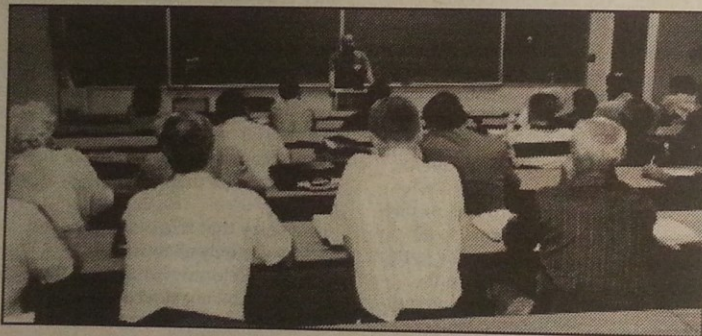
The theme of this year's conference, evolutionism, drew participants from as far away as British Columbia and Virginia. Among denominations represented were members from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in America, the Christian Reformed Church, a number of independent Reformed congregations (affiliated with the Alliance of Reformed Churches), the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Episcopal Church.

Items on the agenda included speeches from six speakers, discussion of a proposed guideline for Reformed hermeneutics, and the preparation of an outline for a confessional response to evolutionism.

The paper on hermeneutics, put together by a committee of scholars, will be presented to the conference's convener, the Alliance of Reformed Churches, when it meets this November.

Rev. T.M. Moor, senior pastor at Timonium Presbyterian Church (PCA) and president of Chesapeake Theological Seminary, kicked off the conference with a speech on the hermeneutics of evolution. Moor

urged the delegates to build on the creeds of the church: the Apostles Creed, Nicea and the Westminster Standards. He noted that at the turn of the century the Reformed world failed to stand on the creeds when facing the question of evolution. By accepting theistic evolution they speeded up the paganization of



*Rev. Steve Schissel leads a workshop on creation.*

American society.

The meetings on Thursday began with the presentation of the initial papers on hermeneutics and evolution. Dr. Nelson Kloosterman of Mid-America Reformed Seminary explained the process which produced the guidelines for Reformed hermeneutics. Rev. Peter De Jong did the same for the statements on evolution. These presentations were each followed by long question and answer sessions.

Following the discussion of the two papers, Louis Lavalley spoke on "Creation and the Creeds." Lavalley

underscored that the classical Reformed creeds are quite explicit in their belief in a six-day creation. In contrast to the 17th Century modern confessional statements have almost uniformly moved towards theistic evolution. Reformed theologians like Charles Hodge and Gordon Clark saw no problem in rejecting a 24-hour, six-day creation in favor of a much longer period of time. Lavalley maintained that the reconsideration of the length of the creation days inevitably leads to a reconsideration of the origin of man. As one example he cited the 1969 decision of the Presbyterian Church in the United States which accepts human evolution. For this reason Lavalley considers the length of days to be a cen-

tral, not a periferal issue.

Dr. Margaret Helder, a botanist from Edmonton, Alberta, treated the delegates to a presentation on dinosaurs. She zeroed in on the problem of dating fossils. She drew attention to a 1961 dinosaur bone discovery in Alaska. All of the bones from this cache are clearly recent in origin. Helder maintained that determining the age of fossils is so fraught with difficulties that their alleged "old age" cannot be used to disprove a creationist position.

Dr. John Byl, a scientist at the University of Alberta, devoted the

longest presentation of the conference to a refutation of theistic evolution. Byl considers the attempts by Calvin College professors Davis Young and Howard Van Till to reconcile Genesis to modern evolution as untenable. According to Byl the problem is straightforward: Genesis does not fit into secular science. Making Christianity intellectually respectable by excluding a literal view of Genesis won't gain the church any standing with secular science. Said Byl, "We may as well be consistent fools, if the world is going to view us as such."

Dr. William Blake, a retired Christian educator, and Dr. Norman De Jong, a professor of education, gave speeches on Evolution and Language and Evolutionism respectively. Blake discussed a Christian view of language in the writings of Augustine and the 18th Century German philosopher, Johan Georg Hamann. Norman De Jong discussed his book on the evolution/creation debate and his disagreements with the Institute for Creation Research.

Dr. George Grant closed the conference with a rousing speech on the Cultural War. Grant urged his listeners to concentrate on orthopraxy, a confessionally consistent life. He maintained that divergences from doctrinal orthodoxy inevitably begin with divergences in practice. Dr. Grant is the collator for the proposed confessional guidelines on egalitarianism to be presented at the 1994 conference.

The revised proposed guidelines for Reformed hermeneutics will be presented to the Alliance of Reformed Churches. Another committee will work on the statements concerning evolution and present them to the 1994 Confessional Conference. The guidelines on egalitarianism will also be presented to the 1994 conference to be held July 13-16 in Wheaton.

## 15 Korean Chu

effect that America Netherland descent marry American citizen national ancestry." In years, the CRC has concerted drive to at groups. The Korean gr a major success story nation's efforts to be nically diverse.

Although Kim was i bringing many of the into the CRC, he no decision. "Now no lor denomination loyal t God and it changes l tions in the name of tics," said Kim, point rent CRC debates o ecclesiastical office — sally condemned in Ke as a symptom of de problems. "The start the horizon in the na all offices to wome "Next, who knows? V lead? Already there is that there will be more

## Korean Dissent Against

The formation of the nation is not the fin Koreans have raised i the women in office ist Synod 1990's decisioi church offices to wom second approval vote Council of Korean Reformed Churches pat mous resolution again office.

"The Korean Coun pull out when the w issue is voted, we did the 1990 synod," said l are told that in 1992 a vote will be taken, so l another meeting and w that we would pull out the